

Search for Man

An Ongoing Project

An AICUF Publication, December 1980

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While rejecting atheism, root and branch, the Church sincerely professes that all men, believers and unbelievers alike, ought to work for the rightful betterment of this world in which all live together. Such an ideal cannot be realized, however, apart from sincere and prudent dialogue.

- Vatican II, Church in the Modern World, no. 21

Catholics should try to cooperate with all men and women of good will to promote whatever is true and just, whatever is holy and worth

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SEARCH FOR MAN AN ONGOING PROJECT

The three papers here presented were read at different dialogue sessions. Dr. Mathew Kurian's paper was published in *Indian Journal of Theology*, Special Number 1978, Father Kappen's paper as No. 2 of *Socialist Perspectives*, and Father Kottukapally's paper in *Vidyajyoti*, November 1979. Our thanks are due to the authours and publishers for permission to reprint them.

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FOREWORD

The search to understand man in himself and in his relationship with nature, society and God is a perennial one. Mystery as he is unto himself, with all the inner tensions of selfhood and otherness, aspirations of personal fulfilment and altruism, unbounded curiosity and inexorable limits, pusillanimity and constraints of environment and his own physical and moral frailty - as opposed to his yearning and capacity to know love and be ever more - he grapples caselessly with his own reality to find deeper meaning for himself and his activity. All this search implies two poles: man as he concretely exists in society, in a particular culture, as a product of natural and historical forces and as a project - as he ought to be, given his deeper aspirations and potentialities. The final aim of all this relentless search is the same: MAN, his fulfilment and happiness. Only through this dialectical quest of the future through the present, the essential through the existential, we can strive to create a new man and a new society.

The three papers presented here are expected to help college students deepen their understanding of man, open out new avenues of further study and reflection, so that in their turn they may contribute towards a greater understanding of man and society and involve themselves through action for creating favourable conditions for a fuller growth. A careful study of these essays will also make them realise the needs of a 'source' study of the eminent thinkers of the past, the deeper values, aspirations and frustrations of our people. With these insights and experiences they will be able to make an original contribution, so that the course of history may be oriented in favour of man, not against him.

Dt. Mathew Kurian exposes the Marxist concept of man, pinpointing and clearing up the misinterpretations of the Marxist concept of man and highlighting some of its positive insights. Fr. Kappen delves deep both into Marxian thought

and Indian tradition to discover their mutual need and relevance. As Father Kappen has shown, for Marxism to have relevance in this country it has to relate itself "to our social and cultural traditions with a view to identifying the points of convergence as well as those issues on which they complement and correct each other." Father Kottukapally exposes three basic aspects of man as emphasized in the Judeo-Christian thinking. It is a synthetic and comprehensive view of man in his limits and possibilities. A careful study of these papers is bound to help achieve greater self-knowledge, as also, greater knowledge of man's relation to nature, fellowman and God — knowledge that must lead to purposeful action.

Claude D'Souza

AICUF National Director

THE MARXIST CONCEPT OF MAN

K. MATHEW KURIAN *

The problem of man, his past, present and future, the unfolding of his destiny in relation to his increasing control over the forces of nature and his attempts to create a new society, have assumed great significance for people belonging to various ideologies and faiths.

Marxism provides an integrated view of man in relation to society. Unlike many other philosophies, in Marxism problems of the individual man are not considered in the abstract, in isolation from his social relations.

The basic concept of Marxism, in relation to man, is that man is 'the ensemble of social relations.' Man is a social being, in his interaction with his fellow human beings, society in general, and in his attempts to control the forces of nature, man graduates as man. In other words, man is a social product. The man of life and blood is both an 'individual' and a 'social being.' It is unrealistic to create a dichotomy between man and society, except in the sense that a particular form of social organisation in a given historical situation may come into conflict with man's goal for his fuller development,

The Marxist concept of man has been misunderstood by many, and distorted by many. The Marxist philosophy of dialectical and historical materialism, the principle that the economic base of society, the mode of production, determines in a fundamental sense man's destiny, has been vulgarised by some scholars as 'economic determinism', implying that the individual human being has no freedom of self-expression and action.

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It would be absolutely wrong to equate the Marxist position that man is the ensemble of social relations' with 'fatalism'. Marxism has nothing to do with fatalism. Marxism does not negate the creative abilities of individuals and their initiatives and independent action. What Marxism insists is that the unfolding of human personality takes place only through concrete historical processes as man participates in changing oppressive social structures and in controlling the 'forces of nature. The social environment, the nature and growth of productive forces and the character of class society determine the social consciousness of individual human beings. In this real sense man himself is a social product.

Marx's concept of man is often distorted by some writers as a narrow concept of 'economic man!'. 1

The term 'dialectical and historical materialism' is often wrongly used by opponents of Marxism to mean 'material interest or motivation for more and more material gain and personal comforts'.

The term 'materialism', as opposed to idealism, is to be understood not in terms of psychic motivations but in terms of the philosophic view of the primacy of matter in motion. Materialism refers to a philosophical world view which negates 'idealistic' views about the universe and the process of change or motion,

The 'materialistic' interpretation of Marx has very little in common with the idea that materialistic or economic motive is the main driving force for human beings. In fact, Marx openly disagreed with such vulgar and mechanistic interpretations of 'materialism'. He differentiated between two types of human drives: constant or 'fixed' drives, for example, hunger, sex etc. 'which exist under all circumstances and which can be changed by social conditions only as far as form and direction are concerned, and 'relative' drives which 'owe their origin only to a certain type of social organization'. The pursuit of maximum economic gain has never been referred to by Marx as a 'fixed'

drive. On the contrary, his writings clearly indicate that he considered it as an aspect of human nature which has been the product of acquisitive class societies, particularly the capitalist society. The materialistic interpretation of history is based on a profound understanding of human history in motion, the ever-changing processes of social development, the transition from one social formation to another, man actively participating in the creation of history.

Two ideas are basic to Marxian understanding of the dynamics of historical change. First, change is due to the contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production. Second, the development of man and society throughout history is characterized by man's struggle with nature and against oppressive social structures. Marxism affirms that it is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness.

Marxism understands man as a complex social being, with possibilities of good and evil, both the traits being imbibed by him from social practice and from the inherited values of society. At the same time, Marxism underlines the possibility, and indeed the need for changing the evil conditions of his existence. Man can change the conditions which envelop him by his active participation in social transformation. In his attempts to transform society, man transforms himself.

The criticism that Marx gave man a passive role in the historical process is unfair and uninformed. In fact, Marx emphasized the active, creative role of man in history. 'While external conditions do make man, man also makes his external conditions'. The important point, however, is to understand the dialectical relations or the dynamic interconnections between man and society, between man and his environment.

The relation between man and society was ably described by Marx thus..... "the human essence is no abstraction inherent in each single individual. In its reality it is the ensemble of the social relations. Man develops as a social being. Social life is the basis on which the individual man develops his consciousness as a social being. Even religious sentiment is a social product the product of a false consciousness."

Marxism rejects all theological propositions relating to human nature which are based on the concepts of original sin and 'congenital selfishness'.

In this connection we may examine the position of Reinhold Niebuhr. For him, what is wrong with man is that man is a sinner. He sees man in terms of his relationship to God; that is, sin is a theological category. Man's condition as a sinner (as distinguished from the fact that he commits particular 'sins' is man's un-williness to acknowledge his finiteness". 2

It is argued by some writers that Niebuhr's view of what is wrong with man is very close to Kierkegaard's in many respects - in the writings of both, what is wrong with man is that man is a sinner. 3

Reinhold Niebuhr states:

However much human ingenuity may increase the treasures which nature provides for the satisfaction of human needs, they can never be sufficient to satisfy all human wants; for man, unlike other creatures, is gifted and cursed with an imagination, which extends his appetites beyond the requirements of subsistence. Human society will never escape the problem of the equitable distribution of the physical and cultural goods which provide for the preservation and fulfilment of human life. 4

Niebuhr is, of course, not representative of all Christian theology. We may examine Catholic, Eastern and other schools of theology. Catholicism insists, broadly, that man's nature is two fold: he is neither flesh nor spirit, but a compound of both. 'It is his function to be a bridge between two worlds, the world of sense and the world of spirit.....' 5 The theological proposition of Augustine on the subject is based on the categories of 'human sin-fulness' and 'divine sovereignty,' St Gregory of Nyssa, who may be treated as an example of the Eastern school of theology.

".....saw the freedom of man as the central element to which everything was to be related, and therefore looked for the same freedom in the very essence of God, and so sought for common ground between God and Man." (6)

Marxism not only rejects all theological concepts of man; it also rejects the existentialist position. Communists have criticised existentialist philosophy as an "invitation to people to dwell in question of despair". (7) Sartre's defence is that

"...existentialism, in our sense of the word, is a doctrine that does render human life possible; a doctrine, also, which affirms that every truth and every action imply both an environment and a human subjectivity." (8)

Sartre, of course denies the charge that existentialist philosophy over-emphasises the evil side of human life.

One may state, along with Sartre, that there are two kinds of existentialists. Jaspers and Gabriel Marcel, who are professed Catholic Christians, come under one category — Christian existentialists. The second category is existentialist atheists which includes Heidegger, Sartre and so on. The common point between these two categories is their belief that existence comes before essence - or that 'we must begin from the subjective'. Atheistic existentialism, of which Sartre is a representative, declares that ".....if God does not exist there is at least one being whose existence comes before its essence, a being which exists before it can be defined by any conception of it. That being is man or, as Heidegger has it, the human reality....." (9)

Sartre and the atheistic existentialists assert that they put the responsibility on man for 'what he is'. "Thus, the first effect of existentialism is that it puts every man in possession of himself as he is, and places the entire responsibility for his existence squarely upon his own shoulders." (10) However, it may be stated that the Marxist concept of man differs in its essentials from the existentialist position.

The Evolution of Humanist Traditions

Many idealistic philosophers insist on the 'irreconcilable contradictions' between the Marxist-Leninist concept of historical materialism and humanism. Their arguments relate to the so-called dichotomy between historical materialism and values of human personality and individual freedom. The attempts of socialist countries to build up collective and communal forms of social organisation are counterposed to the ideal of the flowering of individual personality.

It is important that we make a clear distinction between 'individualism' and 'individual freedom'. Repudiation of 'individualism' should not be confused with suppression of individual freedom. Subjecting the individual's acts to social good is not a negation of individual freedom because any free action by individuals which negates social good is not sustainable as part of civilised action. The abstract concept of 'humanism', that is, the concept of human individuality and freedom devoid of social necessity is not only sterile but positively harmful. The repudiation of such an abstract concept of humanism does not mean the negation of humanism in general.

Humanism as a concept is linked with the question of man's place in the universe, his past, present and future. Man is a complex bio-social being. Man enters into a multiplicity of relationships with other members of the society and thus develops material, social and cultural linkages with other people. Such relationships assume different dimensions relating to psychological, moral, legal, family, socio-economic and political ties. It is obvious, therefore, that the problem of humanism and the concept of man in general have to be studied in a scientific manner and in a historical perspective. In particular, against the backdrop of the enormous strides made by science and technology, we need a scientific solution of the problem of man — the central problem of humanism.

The Marxist-Leninist theory of humanism starts by treating man as a worker, a creative being, and as such, the highest of all values. It finds expression in practical revolutionary struggle and activities designed to achieve free and comprehensive development for all members of society, to establish genuinely human relations among people, nations and countries.

Many writers have attempted to present a dichotomy between the young Marx and the mature Marx. But a careful reading of the writings of the young Marx will show that there is a genuine inter-connection and evolution of thought. (11)

The free and full development of human personality will be possible only in a new social order in which all the means of production are socially owned, where production and distribution processes are designed not for narrow personal interests but for the social good. By raising the social and political consciousness of members of the society, a deliberate attempt will be made to effect a unity between public and private interests, unity between the society and the individual.

Marxism did not evolve from nowhere. It has deep roots in the humanist legacy of the past; it takes into account all that is good in the human heritage, basic moral standards evolved in the people's struggle against all forms of social oppression.

Humanism before Marx did take into account some of these basic moral values — the value of man as an individual, the moral principle that one should stand always for the rights and dignity of human beings, enlarge their freedoms, liberate them from all forms of slavery, bondage and oppression and the moral precept that individuals should strive for the happiness of all mankind.

Though humanism became a developed way of thinking only with the emergence of progressive bourgeois thinkers of Western Europe — in the process of the struggle against feudalism — we find humanist traditions in earlier social formations as well. In mythology we find symbolic expression, in Prometheus, of the selfless champion

of freedom and human happiness'. In early Christianity, in the first century A. D., during the period of struggle against slavery and against Roman power based on slave ownership, there was a powerful movement for liberation and the upholding of human rights.

As Engels wrote:

"Christianity was originally a movement of oppressed people: it first appeared as the religion of the slaves and emancipated slaves, of poor people deprived of all rights of peoples subjugated or despised by Rome." (12)

Since Christianity arose in the wake of such social ferment, it was natural that in its early form it contained a revolutionary, democratic, and humanist spirit. The human hope of salvation from slavery and exploitation, hope of a new Kingdom on earth underlines such a humanist spirit. But as the Christian Church became part of the ruling elite, the principles of humanism were absolutised and idealised and were robbed of their revolutionary and dynamic content. One of the reasons why the humanist traditions of early Christianity could not survive was the fact that such traditions were embedded in mystical forms and ideas, to be actualised only through divine intervention and the coming of the Kingdom of God on earth.

The concept of equality among human beings, propagated by Christianity, and indeed even by early Christianity was based on the understanding that all people were equally sinful before Almighty God. As the Christian Church became part of the powerful political structures, quasi-humanist ideas, abstract concepts of universal all-reconciling love, patience and meekness developed; and they were used as powerful ideological weapons by the ruling class to domesticate the oppressed people. In different periods in the past, and even today in many parts of the world, the organised Christian Churches use their interpretations of Christian theology to domesticate the oppressed by declaring "all vile acts of oppressors against the oppressed to be either

the just punishment of original sin and other sins or trials that the Lord in his infinite wisdom imposes on those redeemed' (13) In the anti-feudal movement throughout the middle ages concepts of freedom and equality were put forward by the leaders of the movements of peasants, artisans and urban poor. Such early ideas of humanism often expressed themselves as heresies and had great historical significance. (14)

A good example of such peasant and plebeian uprising is the uprising in Northern Italy in the early fourteenth century movement led by Dolcino. The rebels attacked feudal monasteries and estates and wanted 'to put into practice by revolutionary means the ideals of the 'apostolic brothers' and to set up communities based on equality and common ownership.' (15) The movement was ultimately crushed by the superior forces of Pope Clement V.

It is important to note that many peasant revolts against feudalism were also explicitly revolts against the then prevailing theological positions of the Christian Church - against ideas of postponement of human happiness to the next world, ideas of submission in relation to masters, passivity, and so on. This active revolutionary struggle uplifted the common folk, nourished their sense of dignity and liberated them from many superstitions that belittled the men of toil and gave them a sense of spiritual and moral inferiority. (16)

Bourgeois Humanism

It was with the development of capitalism that the concept of humanism received a substantial impetus. The rising progressive bourgeoisie attacked feudal modes of production and feudal values. This attack against feudalism, in turn, was linked with the antifeudal struggles of the peasantry. The need of developing capitalism was for an unrestricted supply of manpower-workers not bound by traditional or personal allegiance as under feudalism. This implied the acceptance of the principles of 'equality of

people before law'. The rapid growth of scientific knowledge cut at the very roots of superstition and decadent values which kept working people under cultural bondage.

During the period of Renaissance, bourgeois humanism acquired added strength and vigour. The bold defence by leaders of the Renaissance of human values meant the rejection of religious tutelage. This naturally led to a total denial of the supernatural.

It proclaimed the cult of man and the human reason, expressed invincible faith in man's tremendous creative potential and gradually evolved its own philosophical, sociological and ethical conception in its war on theology and scholasticism. (17)

The advanced thinkers of the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries through their writings, narrowed the 'domain of the divine' and extended the 'domain of man'. The struggle launched by outstanding thinkers such as Nikolaus Copernicus and Giordano Bruno for the acceptance of scientific truth, in fact, meant a direct attack on the feudal church's attitude to life. The bourgeois thinkers of the seventeenth century in England and in other countries further developed humanist ideas.

On the Renaissance, Engels wrote:

"It was the greatest progressive revolution that mankind has so far experienced, a time which called for giants and produced giants - giants in power of thought, passion and character, in universality and learning. The men who founded the modern rule of the bourgeoisie had anything but bourgeois limitations." (18)

No doubt, the transition from the feudal system to the bourgeois socio-economic and political system was a big step forward in the journey towards a truly humanist society and the assertion of human personality. A secular, anti-theological concept of man developed as part of this transition from feudalism to capitalism. However, in the period of the decay

of capitalism, in the wake of the rise and fall of imperialism, colonialism and neocolonialism, the humanist traditions originally developed by the bourgeoisie are being negated. In the present historical epoch, capitalism and imperialism are obstacles to the further enlargement of humanism. Only a revolutionary transformation from capitalism to socialism can create the socio-economic and political conditions conducive to the growth of a truly humanist society free from oppression and exploitation and a society in which the cultural, moral and spiritual values of man will receive the fullest expression. The criticism that man has no place in the materialistic interpretation of history, as propounded by Marx, Engels and Lenin, is baseless. The criticism that Marxist philosophers in the period after Lenin have ignored the problem of human personality - a criticism made by thinkers such as Adam Schaff - is exaggerated, if not totally incorrect.

It would not be wrong to state that Marxism began with the problem of the individual man and has maintained continued interest in the problem. But one who looks for an exclusive and abstract treatment of the problem of humanism in Marxian terms will be disappointed. For, Marx, Engels and Lenin did not consider the problem in isolation. They deliberately refused to pose the problem of the individual, the meaning and purpose of man's life and other related issues, in the abstract. They evolved an integrated view of man and the problem of humanism, as part of the general question of the emancipation of the working people from bondage, the struggle for the creation of a new society, the role of working people as the creators of history, their role in society, their freedoms, rights, dignity and the conditions necessary for the flowering of a truly human personality.

Engels explained why Marx and he were compelled in their struggle against the idealist philosophers to stress the importance of the economic aspects of human life and social development:

"We had to emphasise the main principle vis-a-vis our adversaries, who denied it, and we did not have always the time, the place or the opportunity to give their due to other elements involved in the interaction." (19)

'Alienation' of Man

One of the key concepts in Marxism which has relevance to an understanding of Marxist interpretation of salvation is 'alienation'. The central theme of this concept is man's predicament in experiencing the world and himself passively, as the subject separate from the object. Man, instead of experiencing himself as the acting agent in relation to other human beings and in relation to nature, finds that he is estranged from all of them. The world, including himself and others, appears alien to him. Even the objects of his own creation appear alienated from him, as something standing above and against him.

The theological understanding of 'alienation' is, basically, the estrangement between God and man. It is sometimes related to the 'fall of man' and original sin. Marxism negates all such theological propositions. As Marx wrote, "Theology explains the origin of evil by the fall of man: that is, it assumes as a fact, in historical form, what has to be explained." (20) Marxism, on the contrary, proceeds from concrete realities. It does not analyse any phenomenon on the basis of 'assumed' facts.

Religious estrangement, that is, the assumed estrangement between God and man, occurs only in the realm of consciousness, of man's inner life. (21) But, as Marx pointed out, "economic estrangement is that of real life; its transcendence therefore embraces both aspects." (22)

Marx wrote: "It is true that labour produces for the rich wonderful things - but for the workers it produces privation. It produces palaces - but for the workers, hovels. It produces beauty - but for the workers, deformity." (23) Again, "The worker becomes all the poorer and the more he produces,

the more his production increases in power and range. The worker becomes an ever cheaper commodity the more commodities he creates. With the increasing value of the world of things proceeds, in direct proportion, the devaluation of the world of men." (24) The one dimension of the problem of alienation is that "the object which labour produces - labour's product - confronts it as something alien, as a power independent of the producers." (25) In other words, it is the alienation in respect of the worker's relationship to the products of his labour.

The second dimension of the problem is the alienation of the act of production itself. Labour is external to the worker. The worker's activity belongs to another. It is not his spontaneous activity. It does not belong to his essential being. It is the loss of himself.

".....In his work, therefore, he does not affirm himself, does not feel content but unhappy, does not develop freely his physical and mental energy but mortifies his body and ruins his mind. The worker, therefore, only feels himself outside his work, and in his work feels outside himself." (26)

A third dimension or aspect of estranged labour is the alienation of man from his species being. Marx pointed out:

"It is in just that working-up of the objective world, therefore that man first really proves himself to be a species being. This production is his active species life. In tearing away from man the object of his production, estranged labour tears from him his species being." (27)

The alien being is not nature, not God, but man himself. In a capitalist society the root cause of alienation is the power of the exploiting class on labour and the products of labour.. Private property in the means of production creates the conditions for the alienation of the workers. Labour and the production of labour belong not to workers, but to men who own the means of production. "If the workers' activity is a torment to him, to another it must be

delight and his life's joy. Not the goods, not nature, but only man himself can be this alien power over man." (28)

Marx made a distinction between the sense of 'possessing' or 'having' and the sense of 'being'. Private property has made us 'so stupid and one-sided' that we consider an object as ours only when we 'possess' it or when it is 'used' by us. (29) The value system based on private property has blunted our human sense to such an extent that we have an object only when it is owned in the form of capital or other tangible form, only when it is directly possessed. The concept of 'having' has even penetrated human relations. The caricature of human relations in a capitalist society, between parents and children, between husband and wife and so on, are permeated by chauvinistic 'possessive love' characteristic of the possessive instincts of private property.

The positive transcendence of private property is, therefore, the key to 'the positive transcendence of all estrangement' and therefore is "the real appropriation of the human 'essence by and for man'. Communism is "the complete return of man to himself as a social (i.e., human) being - a return become conscious and accomplished within the entire wealth of previous development." (30)

Communism is "..... the genuine resolution of the conflict between man and nature and between existence and essence, between objectification and self-confirmation, between freedom and necessity, between the individual and the species." (31)

Marxism attaches crucial significance to the liberation of workers from servitude, from the bondage of private property, not because Marxists are concerned only with their liberation. In fact, Marxism assigns a leading role to workers for the emancipation of the entire society. In the words of Marx, "..... the emancipation of society from private property, etc., from servitude, is expressed in the political form of

the emancipation of the workers, not that their emancipation alone was at stake but because the emancipation of workers contains universal human emancipation - and it contains this, because the whole of human servitude is involved in the relation of the workers to production, and every relation of servitude is but a modification." (32)

Man, as a social being, makes his own history. He is his own creator. Man gives birth to himself in the process of social interaction, in the process of history. 'The essential factor in his process of self-creation of the human race lies in its relationship to nature, and hence himself'. Thus, it is futile to look for 'Salvation' beyond the confines of man, society and nature. 'Salvation' or liberation is man's own enterprise; he is capable of liberating himself through his struggle against nature and through the revolutionary practice of changing oppressive socio-economic and political structures.

NOTES

1. This is the title used by Perry LeFevre in his study of Marx. See his book, *Understanding of Marx*, Westminster Press, Philadelphia
2. Reinhold Niebuhr, *Faith and History*, Charles Scribner's Sons, Philadelphia, P.122
3. Perry LeFevre, *Understandings of Man*, Westminster Press, Philadelphia, P.122
4. Reinhold Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, SCM Press, London, 1963, P.1
5. Christopher Dawson, 'The Nature and Destiny of Man' in Guthbest (ed) *The Supernatural*, Sheed and Ward, London, 1954, P. 57
6. T.Paul Verghese (now, Metropolitan Paulose Gregorios), *Freedom and Authority*, CLS-ISPCK-LPH, 1974, P.61

7. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Existentialism and Humanism*. Methuen, London, 1949, P.23
8. Ibid. P.24
9. Ibid. PP.27-28
10. Ibid. P.29
11. Loyal D. Eston and Kurt H. Guddat. *Writings of the Young Marx on Philosophy and Society*, Anchor Books, Doubleday and Company, New York, 1967
12. Frederic Engels, 'On the History of Early Christianity', *Marx and Engels on Religion*, Moscow, 1966, P. 281
13. M. Petrosyan, *Humanism; Its Philosophical, Ethical and Sociological Aspects*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1972, PP. 18-19
14. For example the Lollard heresy among the peasants, and other rural poor in 14th Century England
15. M.Petrosyan, op. cit., P.22
16. Ibid. P.22
17. Ibid. P.27
18. Engels, *Dialectics of Nature*, Moscow, 1966, P.21
19. Marx and Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, Moscow, 1965, P. 418.
20. Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, P. 55
21. Ibid. P. 96
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid. P. 68
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid. P. 66
26. Ibid. P. 69
27. Ibid. P. 72
28. Ibid. P. 95
29. Ibid.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid.

Questions for Discussion

1. In what sense is man a 'social product'?
2. Briefly discuss the concept of 'dialectical and historical materialism' as exposed in the paper.

3. Distinguish between 'individual freedom' and 'individualism.' How does Marxism uphold the former, while rejecting the latter?
 4. Trace the development of humanism before Marxism. How are humanistic values assimilated into Marxist humanism?
 5. Discuss 'alienation' as a 'key concept of Marxism.' What is the cause of alienation and how is it overcome?
 6. Discuss the 'leading role' Marxism assigns to workers in the final overcoming of all human alienations.
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MARXISM IN THE INDIAN CONTEXT

S. KAPPEN S. J. *

No social movement can inspire the masses so long as it ignores what is positive in the conceptions, values, symbols, and myths inherited from the past and still alive in popular consciousness. But, for any meaningful dialogue with the indigenous culture Marxists must return to their sources, especially to the original thought of Karl Marx, which is richer than what their catechisms have to offer. In this tract an attempt is made to relate the thought of Marx to our social and cultural traditions with a view to identifying the points of convergence as well as those issues on which they correct or complement each other. Admittedly, the reflections that follow are in the manner of gropings and are subject to correction in the light of subsequent studies. Nor are they to be understood as an attempt at educating the Communist Parties. Marx lives not only in the political parties named after him but also in the general intellectual climate of the country as a force which all who stand for socialism have to reckon with. It is to these that this tract is addressed.

The human meaning of productive forces

For Marx man's relationship to nature is not contemplative but practical. Man uses tools and machinery to reshape nature and adapt it to satisfy his needs. This whole process is what is meant by productive force. It involves not only tools and machinery but also the existing level of science, technology and the organization of labour. If productive forces have to do with man's relation to nature as mediated by other men, the relations of production, on the contrary, have to do with his relationship to his fellowmen as mediated by nature in the process of production. More specifically, the relations of production refer to the relations that exist between those who own the means of production and appropriate the product and those others who do not. According to Marx, the dialectical conflict between productive

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forces and the relations of production is the very mainspring of history, the matrix of all revolutions: "At a certain stage of their development, the material forces of production in society come in conflict with the existing relations of production within which they have been at work before. From forms of development of the forces of production these relations turn into their fetters. Then occurs a period of social revolution." ("Preface to a Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy") In regard to capitalism the fundamental conflict is between corporate social production (productive force) and individual appropriation (relations of production). Its final outcome is the downfall of capitalist relations and the birth of socialism.

Implied in the text just cited, as in many others, is the idea that it is relations of production which stand in the way of human advancement, contrasted with which productive forces constitute a principle of liberation. This is also borne out by the absence in the works of Marx of any sustained critique of the productive forces of capitalism. He has no doubt highlighted the dehumanizing character of the extreme division of labour, itself a productive force, that characterizes capitalism. But such division of labour is seen as a necessary stage in the development of man which, in the long run, will create the objective - if not also subjective - conditions for the supersession of capitalism and for the emergence of a socialist society.

Today, however, it has become necessary to critically view the productive forces of capitalism, especially of capitalism in its monopolistic stage. What distinguishes monopoly capitalism is that it controls the market instead of being controlled by it. This it does mainly by creation in people artificial needs for the wares it wants to sell. In a society where consumers have been already conditioned to consider the latest the best this leads to the overgrowth of machinery. The same trend is reinforced by the belief widely held in capitalist countries that whatever is technically possible, whether useful or not, ought to be accomplished. In consequence, no sooner are machines made

than they are rendered obsolete. Obsolete machines go to form the graveyards of capitalism unless, of course, they are exported to the economically backward countries under the guise of foreign aid. The growth of machinery is matched by a corresponding growth of irrelevant science and technology. The gravity of the problem will become clear when we remember that 65 per cent of the corporate investments in the Western world are for 'rationalization and technical innovation' (Roger Garaudy, *The Alternative Future*) calculated to deform and denature the masses by reducing them to consumers of useless and even harmful goods (male and female deodorants, cosmetics, helps to sexual potency etc.) or to fashion the instruments of mass murder and collective extermination (nuclear bombs, missiles, armaments in general). This being the case, it is wrong to consider the capitalist productive forces of science, technology, and machinery as neutral or, worse, as instruments of liberation. They are in fact forms in which the ideology of capitalism becomes congealed and embodied. Far from being the prerequisite for the birth of the free, *social individual*, they are, rather, so many obstacles in its way.

One sees the relevance here of the Gandhian critique of technology and industrialization. There is, to be sure, a certain ambiguity in the position of Gandhiji in this matter. At times he gives the impression that he views industrialization as intrinsically evil. He wrote "Pandit Nehru wants industrialization because he thinks that, if it is socialized, it would be free from the evils of capitalism. My own view is that the evils are inherent in industrialization and no amount of socialization can eradicate them". (*Harijan*, 29 - 9 - 1940) But it is likely that what he staunchly opposed was industrialization motivated by the lust for profit. He was not opposed to that industrialization which contributed to the total well-being of each and all. "Men go on 'saving labour' till thousands are without work and thrown on the open streets to die of starvation. I want to save time and labour not for a fraction of mankind, but for all. I want the concentration of wealth, not in the hands of a few, but in the hands of all. Today, machinery merely helps a few to ride on the backs of millions. The impetus behind it all is not the philanthropy

to save labour but greed. It is against this constitution of things that I am fighting with all my might". (Young India, 13-11-1924). This in reality is a plea for a new type of science, technology, and industrialization that will answer human, social needs, a plea that is quite in harmony with the fundamental concern of Marx himself. In fact, if we are not to lose our national soul and identity we should opt for a path of technology that reflects what is best in our own system of values. Seen in this perspective, the numerous firms and factories dotting our urban landscape, which have been set up to produce luxury goods to satisfy the engineered needs of a fraction of the population, deserve to be dismantled and consigned to the dunghill of history. As a possible alternative we should welcome the Gandhian stress on indigenous technology.

The humanization of needs

Man is not only action seeking to transform his environment; he is also passion, passion for fuller knowing and being. In fact, passion in the sense of need is the wellspring of action. Every action man initiates is in response to a passion, to a need. His needs, however, are not static, given once and for all. In satisfying given needs he acquires new ones, physical as well as spiritual. And the greatest of his needs is the need for other men. For Marx, the whole of history is a preparation for man to become an object of sense perception and sensuous need. (Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts) In capitalism, however, the proper unfolding of human needs is thwarted. Production for profit leads to the proliferation of manipulated inane needs, which, in the final analysis, are reducible to the need for money. For, being the universal equivalent of commodities, money can be exchanged for wealth, power, prestige, sex, love or even the favour of God. It reduces all human values to commodities, all qualities to quantity. "The need for money is, therefore, the real need created by the modern economic system, and the only need it creates." (Ibidem)

The materialism of needs can be overcome only in a socialist society in which production will be not of exchange

values (commodities) but of use values i.e. of goods for the satisfaction of social needs. Such a society will witness an explosion of truly human needs. It will see the birth of 'the plenitude of human need', of the wealthy man "who needs a complex of human manifestations of life, and whose own self-realization exists as an inner necessity, a need". (Ibidem)

It will create conditions in which man's need for self-expression, for the production of the beautiful, and for human togetherness will be fully met. It will also bring to perfection the specificity of his basic drives. In the words of Marx, "Let us assume man to be *man*, and his relation to the world to be a human one. Then love can only be exchanged for love, trust for trust, etc. If you wish to enjoy art you must be an artistically cultivated person; if you wish to influence other people you must be a person who has a stimulating and encouraging effect upon others. Every one of your relations to man and to nature must be a *specific expression*, corresponding to the object of your will, of your *real individual life*". (Ibidem)

Contrary to what is commonly held, there are points of convergence between the Marxian critique of needs and the Indian tradition of renunciation and simplicity, of which Gandhiji is an outstanding advocate. Like Marx he rejected the materialism of needs that characterizes capitalism. He wrote: "The more we indulge our passions, the more unbridled they become. Our ancestors, therefore, set a limit to our indulgences. They saw that happiness was largely a mental condition. A man is not necessarily happy because he is rich, or unhappy because he is poor. The rich are often seen to be unhappy, the poor to be happy. Observing all this our ancestors dissuaded us from luxuries and pleasures. It was not known how to invent machinery, but our forefathers knew that if we set our minds after such needs, we would become slaves and lose our moral fibre". The basic concern underlying this plea for austerity is the realization of authentic selfhood understood as freedom from and control over, one's passions - a motive that is conspicuously absent in the writings

of Marx. With the latter the rejection of the quantification of needs is inspired by the concern for the total man and for the development of *all his human* needs. However, the two concerns — self-control and self-unfolding — are not mutually exclusive. On the contrary, each acts as a pre-requisite for the realization of the other. While Marxism has to integrate within itself self-control as a positive human value, Gandhism in turn must make its own the Marxian concern for the blossoming of *all human needs*, and shed its romanticism of poverty and its nostalgia for the simplicity of the primitive man.

The social individual

Man, according to Marx, is essentially related not only to nature but also to other men. Even his relation to nature, whether of production or consumption, is mediated by society. How does Marx define further the sociality of man? His view steers clear of both individualism and collectivism. He rejected the notion of the individual as an isolated being closed in upon himself and guided solely by egotism and private interest. He consistently criticized the tendency of bourgeois intellectuals to eternalize the man of private interest and competition as the natural man as he always existed. For him the bourgeois individual is a product of capitalism and, as such, destined to disappear. Equally consistently he opposed collectivism which sacrifices the individual to society as though he were but a means to social ends. It is significant that he defined socialism as "an association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all". (Manifesto of the Communist Party) Elsewhere, too, especially in the *Grundrisse*, he speaks of socialism creating the conditions for the free and full development of the individual.

But the freedom of the individual envisaged here is not such as finds its limit in the existence of other men. It is in societies based on free competition that the 'other' is experienced as a limit or a threat to one's freedom. For Marx, on the contrary, the other — society — is the condition for realizing one's freedom. "Only in association with others has each

individual the means of cultivating his talents in all directions. Only in community therefore is personal freedom possible. In the previous substitutes for community, in the State etc. personal freedom existed only for those individuals who grew up in the ruling class and only in so far as they were members of this class. The illusory community in which, up to the present individuals have combined, always acquired an independent existence apart from them, and since it was a union of one against another it represented for the dominated class not only a completely illusory community but also a new shackle. In a genuine community individuals gain their freedom in and through their association". (The German Ideology)

Each man, therefore, is a centre of free decision and initiative to be realized within the framework of his essential relation to others, to society. Society is neither outside individuals nor a mere aggregate of them, but "the sum of connections and relationships in which individuals find themselves". (Grundrisse) Whereas in capitalism these relationships take the form of forces hostile to man, under conditions of socialism they will be transparent to him and under his conscious control. Each individual will then encompass in thought as well as being the whole of mankind. Though man is a unique individual and it is just his particularity that makes him an individual, *a really individual communal being*—he is equally the *whole*, the ideal whole, the subjective existence of society as thought and experienced". (Manuscripts) This vision of the *total man* is reaffirmed in his mature writings where he will refer to the *individual communal being* as the *social individual*, i. e., the individual who has appropriated the general productive forces of society and has learned to master his own social relations. (Grundrisse) The *social individual* is the effective and definitive supersession of both collectivism and individualism.

Marx's vision of man provides the theoretical framework for a critique of the Indian tradition as it operates today in the context of developing capitalism. Both individualism and collectivism are very much part of the Indian heritage while the former is characteristic of her religious quest, the latter informs

her social relations, Indian religiosity has always had for its primary aim individual rather than collective salvation. Today the same attitude coexists with, and draws nourishment from, the bourgeois culture of private interest and competition. On the other hand, in many parts of rural India the individual is still subordinated to the collectivity, whether of joint-family, caste or community. It might as well be that it is precisely the social conditions in which the individual could not come to his own that made him seek compensation in the form of a merely individual salvation. Be that as it may, traditional forms of collectivism are today reinforced by the regimentation of individual freedom by monopoly capitalism and by an authoritarian state. The only solution to the individualist and collectivist denial of the human is to work for a new social order based on the Marxian concept of the *social individual*. However, Marx did not deal at any length with the kind of structure society should have if it is to safeguard man's freedom and the sociality. Nor could he have formulated a model valid for all countries. It is up to us to work out a model on the basis of our material and spiritual resources. In any attempt in this direction we must take into consideration the Gandhian contribution. The structural principles for a new social order which he enunciated are valid even today. Particularly relevant is his call for the decentralization of economic and political power, and for the primacy of direct over indirect democracy.

Man as subject

The dialectic of the subject and the object is central to Marxian thinking. Contrasted with Hegel, the fundamental concern of Marx was not the elimination of the object by reducing it to the subject but the elimination of the *alienated character* of the object whereby it installs itself as alien and hostile to man. In other words, his aim was to render the objective world (productive forces and relations of production) transparent by bringing it under the conscious control of man, in other words, to make man the subject of history. Meanwhile, under capitalism man is dominated by the world of objects. This domination, however, is not

such that he is totally devoid of freedom and initiative. Even in the present state of alienation he is, though within limits, the creator of history. Marx wrote in his *Theses on Feuerbach*: "The materialist doctrine concerning the changing of circumstances and education forgets that circumstances are changed by men." Similarly, in the *Holy Family*: "History does *nothing*:... it *does not* fight battles.' It is *men*, real living men, who do all this, who possess things and fight battles. It is not history which uses men as a means of achieving--as if it were an individual person--its own ends. History is *nothing* but the activity of men in pursuit of their ends."

Though the birth of automatic subjectivity is the primary concern of Marx it is rendered highly problematic by the premises of his own thinking, especially by the determining role he attributes to productive forces. True, he recognizes the capacity of consciousness to transcend the given by ideally projecting models to be subsequently realized in practice, and sees in this capacity the characteristic that distinguishes man from animals. (*Capital I*) But in the analysis of the concrete dialectics of history the subjective is represented as determined by the objective -- by productive forces and relations of production. Typical is the following passage where he describes the emergence of revolutionary consciousness: "When the worker recognizes the products as being his own and condemns the separation of the conditions of his realization as an intolerable imposition, it will be an enormous progress in consciousness, *itself the product of the method of production based on capital*, and a death knell of capital in the same way that once the slaves became aware that they were persons, that they did not need to be the property of others, the continued existence of slavery could only vegetate on as an artificial thing, and could not continue to be the basis of production". (*Grundrisse*) That the capitalist mode of production will give rise to revolutionary consciousness is but a postulate of dialectical thinking disproved by subsequent history. Besides how could a consciousness determined by the object (the mode of production) inaugurate the history of man as a self-deter-

mining subject? It looks as though the profound concern of Marx to save human subjectivity founds on the dialectic.

Be that as it may, the main failure of Marx lies less in what he says than in what he fails to say of subjectivity. Till the end he was engrossed in analysing the objective structures of society. Nowhere in his writings do we find any serious discussion of the existential problems which each man faces in the intimacy of his own subjectivity. Marx has nothing to say on the ambivalence, fragility, and vulnerability of human freedom; nothing also on the existential problems associated with aggression, lust, sin and guilt. Even on the problem of death what he says sounds casual and evasive. He wrote: '*Death* seems to be a harsh victory of the species over the individual and to contradict their unity; but the particular individual is only a *determinate species-being* and as such he is mortal'. (Manuscripts) Here the individual as a determinate species-being is sacrificed to the universal species-being which is mankind as a whole. His humanism, therefore, has no answer for the problem of death.

The failure to grapple with these existential problems have serious implications for revolutionary action. How could there be irrevocable commitment to revolution if the ambivalence of freedom (the will-to-power and the will-to-love, the drive for aggression and the instinct for fellowship, loyalty and defection, courage and cowardice etc) are not resolved, and how could they be resolved unless man is taken hold of by an ultimate concern? How can anyone sacrifice his life for the cause of revolution if he does not know how its final outcome confers meaning on his present individual existence? It is vain to hope that the mere restructuring of the economy will ipso facto solve these and other problems of human subjectivity.

It is here that Marx can profit from dialogue with Gandhian philosophy. It was the unique contribution of the latter to have combined the Indian religious tradition with its stress on subjective liberation - as *freedom from* anger, lust, self-seeking, and attachment, and *freedom for* communion

with the Absolute - with the struggle for political liberation. He struck a new path of religiosity which seeks the Absolute in the heart of the relative, the ultimate in the here and now. Satyagraha which means 'holding on to truth' includes commitment not only to truth as revealed in concrete historical situations but also to the Absolute truth. In the measure in which the revolutionary has achieved *freedom from* the bondages within and *freedom for* the pursuit of the Ultimate he is able to maintain serenity in the face of conflict, universal compassion in the thick of struggle, and an attitude of forgiveness even towards one's class enemies. Were a revolution to be guided by unbridled passions, it would either prove abortive or will only serve to install new structures of exploitation and domination.

Marx in his turn brings a much needed corrective to the tendency in Indian tradition to consider human subjectivity in isolation from the world of objects. He can free us from the illusion that problems of sin, guilt, death, despair and meaninglessness can find an adequate solution without in any way changing the world we live in. They are at once the result and the cause of objective structures of exploitation and domination. The existing social system condemns millions to death and makes life so intolerable that many look on death itself as the harbinger of liberation. It maintains conditions which diminish freedom, foster deviance and crime, and create morbid guilt. These, in their turn reinforce the inhumanity of the existing social system. This concrete dialectic of the subjective and the objective, of the personal and the structural, is something that India has to assimilate from the Marxian heritage if her spiritual energies are not to be wasted in the pursuit of an illusory, naked self.

History: negation and affirmation

Marx inherited from Hegel the seminal idea that man is not an immutable essence given once and for all but a process and a project. And the very process whereby he

comes to birth' is history. Its moving force is the dialectic of negation, which means that any given reality can attain to higher levels of being only by negating its limits. This dialectic assumes the twofold form of objectivation and alienation. (Ibidem) Objectivation consists in this that man, through work, externalizes his powers in the form of products — material, social, and cultural — and thereby humanizes himself ever more, in creating objects he becomes a subject; in humanizing nature he becomes naturalized. Objectivation in this sense is constitutive of the essence of man and, as such, characterizes all stages of history. Alienation, on the contrary, means that the objects created by man set themselves up as alien to him to the point of enslaving him. (Ibidem) The relation between objectivation and alienation is one of unity in distinction — of unity because what is alienated is the result and the process of objectivation (product and work) so that there is no alienation without objectivation; of distinction because there can be objectivation without alienation. For instance, under primitive conditions of communal ownership, man produced objects without their ever becoming alienated. The same will be true also of socialist society. Under capitalism, on the contrary objectivation necessarily takes the form of alienation. The distinction between objectivation and alienation is of capital importance for the understanding of the transition to socialism.

For Marx private property is the fundamental alienation of man, the matrix of all other alienations. However, it is not alienation pure and simple. For what is it but the product of labour (=objectivation)? Hence superseding private property does not mean just destroying it. The products and the productive forces created by the regime of private property must be carried over into the future. Since social relations and realities of the so-called superstructure (laws, religion, philosophy, art etc.) are also products of labour, they are also to be both negated and affirmed, left behind and preserved. Here it must be borne in mind that, what is meant is not mere preservation but also sublimation i. e. realizing what is to be preserved at a higher level. Socialism,

therefore, represents not just a negation of all that went before it but a recuperation of all the wealth of earlier stages of development. (Ibidem) For instance, the feudal relations of dependence will definitely have to be left behind, but not without realizing on a higher plane the personal non-fetishist character of human relations that obtained in feudal society. Similarly, while the capitalist relation of production will be abolished, the wealth of productive forces and the objective conditions for a fuller and richer life that they brought into being will have to be maintained and further developed. Likewise, socialism signifies the destruction not of the state as the organic structure of society but of the state as the guardian of the interests of the privileged classes. What it seeks is not the abolition of family as such but of the *bourgeois* family which reduces women and children to the position of so many units of productive force. In short, the future is not built on the ashes of the past but on the wealth of possibilities contained in it.

If so, the very logic of the dialectic of history as enunciated by Marx requires of all Marxists that they identify themselves with what is of abiding value in the Indian tradition. And this is just what they have failed to do. The model of socialism they project, the methodology of revolution they advocate, and the analysis they propose of Indian society—all of these are largely determined by conceptual stereotypes imported from the west. Their language and pattern of thinking savour of an alien culture and of alien lands. Paradoxically, though, the same people are today all too willing to cooperate with the obscurantist and reactionary forces of caste, religion and communalism where it suits the politics of power. On the other hand, those who claim to be guardians of our cultural heritage, none too often resort to the inane policy of reviving beliefs and practices long since rendered obsolete and out of tune with the self-awareness of the contemporary Indian. The only way to overcome these aberrations of theory and practice is for all who are committed to socialism, Marxists or not, to return to the original perspective of Marx and make their own his project of socialism as the supersession—in the threefold

sense of abolition, preservation, and sublimation—of the past as well as of the present.

Questions for discussion

1. What is the point of Gandhi's opposition to industrialization?
2. Point out similarities between Marxist and Gandhian criticism of "materialism of needs"?
3. "While Marxism has to integrate within itself self-control as a positive human value, Gandhism in turn must make its own the Marxian concern for the blossoming of all human needs, and shed its romanticism of poverty, and its nostalgia for the simplicity of primitive man." Discuss.
4. "It looks as though the profound concern of Marx to save human subjectivity founders on the dialectic." How?
5. Existential questions bearing upon freedom, suffering, death and destiny have no answer in terms of Marxism. Discuss this statement.
6. Indicate ways along which Indian tradition and Marxism could meet in mutually correcting and enriching dialogue. Show how this dialogue is necessitated by the (Hegelian-Marxist) principle of "supersession," as abolition, preservation and sublimation.

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THE CHRISTIAN CONCEPT OF MAN

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'Noti s'auton' (Know thyself) stood writ large upon the entrance door of Plato's academy. *'Noverim Te, noverim me'* (Let me know Thee, let me know myself) used to be St. Augustine's prayer. In a way, man's greatest problem and challenge, as well as threat, has always been man himself. And we know only too well that this is the case today more than ever before. Also, as microcosm, man sums up and bears within himself all that *is*, referring and relating everything to himself. Therefore, all schools of thinking and all ways of praxis, no matter how divergent among themselves, always had man as their centre of concern.

This central position of man as subject of ultimate concern is, I believe, the real basis of and meeting point for a dialogue between Christians and Marxists. No matter how divergent theory and ideology, they must in their entirety derive themselves from and orientate themselves by the basic concern that living man is. For here also it holds that man is not made for the law but the law for man.

The Christian concept of man is derived from Christian life and experience. And, life and experience being greater than thought (being its source and goal) it has to constantly change and evolve in response to the evolution of life and experience. This means that the Christian concept of man is not an abstract, once and for all finished, product but something that keeps growing and adapting itself. What follows, therefore, is an attempt to present the essential features of the Christian concept of man as the interpretation of contemporary Christian experience.

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The Central Truth of Christianity

The central truth which gives the Christian concept of man its uniquely distinctive character is Jesus Christ, whom Christians confess and proclaim as Lord and Saviour. Jesus of Nazareth is, for the Christian, not only a teacher and guide, say like Socrates or Buddha for their followers, but the object of his faith commitment, one who demands unconditional obedience and surrender. But this is not blindly or as an external imposition. In Jesus, as the incarnate Word of God, who loved man unto laying down his life for man and who through his resurrection restored and renewed mankind, the Christian sees the ultimate meaning of his quest, and experiences him as life of his life. (Cf. John 1,1-44; 14,6; Gal 2,19f) This centrality of Jesus to the life and thinking of the Christian not only colours but determines the Christian concept of man. In fact, it will be entirely justified to say that the Christian answer to the question who and what man is is *Jesus Christ* and what man is and can become in relation to Jesus.

In Jesus, identifying himself with man and taking upon himself human destiny by becoming man, God revealed and gave himself to man. (Phil 2, 5ff.) In Jesus, too, every man, indeed the whole creation, grows into the divine life and nature. ("For the full content of divine nature lives in Christ, in his humanity, and you have been given full life in union with him" --Col, 8, 9f.)

In relation to this central Christian truth we may distinguish three essential aspects to the Christian concept of man, namely, creatureliness, sinfulness and the new life of redemption.

Man the Creature

That man draws his being and depends for it entirely on God is of primary importance to the Christian concept of man. That God is Creator and absolute Lord of all is

a truth that runs through the whole Bible and Christian tradition. But it is vital that we analyse and properly understand this confession of faith.

As was already said, creatureliness denotes a relation of total dependence of the creature upon the Creator. ("In him we live, move and exist" --Acts 17, 28.) The Christian concept of man is thus essentially relational, which means that man is who and what he is totally in relation to an Other, who exists and acts in total independence from man. In the ultimate analysis, the beginning and the end of man is God, from whom all things originate, in whom all things subsist and to whom all things return.

Man is created. This statement at once confronts us with the problem of creation versus evolution. Time was when the religious belief in creation and the scientific theory of evolution were considered mutually exclusive both by believers and their opponents. Now, however, the whole atmosphere has changed - except in certain remarkably uninformed and unenlightened circles on both sides. Generally speaking, no more irreconcilable conflict is seen between creation and evolution, the one a religious belief and the other a scientific theory. Believers are not only not required to reject evolution; there are, in fact, a large number of persons, well informed and competent in both areas, who firmly and ardently uphold both creation and evolution, as not merely compatible but, indeed, as mutually inclusive.

What really was the problem of creation versus evolution? The problem consisted in the inability in reconciling total dependence of the creature on a transcendent God with evolution as a self-motivated and self-directing process, where the universe is conceived as dynamically interconnected in a relationship of genetic dependence. To be totally dependent on God in being and activity seemed necessarily to imply total exclusion of intrinsic dynamism and activity in the creature. The universe is either self-originating and self-evolving by its own intrinsic motive and directive force or it is statically and passively dependent on God. These were

the alternatives.

As time went by, better understanding dawned on both sides. Believers realized that the biblical account of creation did not mean to teach truths of natural science and so did not warrant their upholding or contradicting scientific statements on its strength. Scientists realized that the scientific theory of evolution did not warrant positions on questions deriving from philosophical and religious experiences. Scientific practice or theory as such did not warrant the exclusion of a transcendent Creator in relation to the evolution of the universe or the reduction of man to the sub-human. The only responsible course for science, it seemed, was to leave such questions to philosophy and religion, while these disciplines grew wise enough to leave scientific questions to scientists. Even more importantly, it was realized that a relational structure belong to the essence of being on all levels and that, consequently, dependence as such need not mean loss of inner dynamism and autonomy. Quite the contrary. In an interrelated system the autonomy of each member essentially depends on its relation to the whole. For theologians it became evident that to be dependent on God necessarily meant to be and to act with inner dynamism on the part of the creature and that for man to be creature meant to be *co-creator*.

Man Created in the Image of God

In the biblical account creation (which, it may be noted, is neither history nor tradition overgrown with legend, but a saga or myth with a doctrinal content) man's creation takes place quite differently from that of other beings. While these come to be by a simple command of God, when coming to man, God seems to pause and make a decision: "Let us make man in our own image, in the likeness of ourselves, and let them be masters of the fish of the sea, the birds of the heaven, the cattle, all the wild beasts and all the reptiles that crawl upon the earth." (Gn 1, 26). In the second account of creation, "Yahweh of God fashioned man of dust

from the soil. Then he breathed into his nostrils a breath of life, and thus man became a living being." (Gn 2, 7) Bible scholars are of one mind that the expressions 'image' and 'likeness' of God are to be understood functionally, as the explanatory clause makes evident. For man to be in the image and likeness of God is to rule over creation as God's depute. Man stands out as unique from amidst the surrounding universe as its master and ruler, subject, in principle, to none and nothing but to God alone. No creature, no part of creation and no power in nature are in principle beyond man's authority and power. Thus by divine charter, so to say, man is freed from his instinctive and primitive fear of the universe with all its fascinating and frightening vastness and complexity and asked to take charge of it. Man is not just one among the creatures, just a freak product of nature, but a very special creature with authority and power over nature. (However, it bears emphasizing that this authority does not include any warrant to wantonly loot the earth as contemporary man is doing to his own and his species' peril.)

Man is created. This bars any boasting on man's part. Unlike in extra-biblical myths, the biblical myth recognizes no continuity of nature of relationship of natural descent between God and man. Man's being in its entirety depends on the free will and disposition of God, whose name is JAHWEH, the Unnamable, the Totally Other.

Equally significant, *man* is created in the image and likeness of God, not the great ancestor of the people of Israel. As Bible scholars have pointed out, this is a very important trait of the biblical account of creation. Notwithstanding the fact that the people of Israel had a pronounced self-understanding as the chosen people of God, there is no effect whatever in the Israelite saga of Creation to attribute any special intrinsic worth to the race or people of Israel. It is not that the saga is not interested in tracing Israel's ancestry right to the beginning of creation. But Israel's ancestor in the saga is just an ordinary insignificant figure among the descendents of the first man, with no claim whatever to superiority over the rest of mankind. In this way the

Bible asserts the unity of the human race and the equality of every race and group of men with every other.

So also, by the way the biblical story narrates the creation of the woman, she is raised from the status of man's chattel, as was the case in the ancient world, to that of his companion and the sharer of his destiny. "God created man in the image of himself, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them." (Gn 1, 27) Or, as we read in the second account of creation, Yahweh God found that man had no help-mate among all creation and "So Yahweh God made man fall into a deep sleep. And while he slept, he took one of his ribs and enclosed it in flesh. Yahweh God built the rib he had taken from man into a woman and brought her to man. The man exclaimed: "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh." This is to be called woman, for this was taken from man. This is why a man leaves his father and mother and joins himself to his wife and they become one body." (Gn 2, 21-24)

Fallen Man

That the human condition is experienced as shot through with a contradiction needs neither proof nor illustration. Pascal spoke with profound feeling of the "grandeur and misery" of man. Rousseau found man "born free but everywhere bound in chains." For Sarte, "man is what he is not and is not what he is," a "useless passion." Marx's analysis finds man as "alienated", alienated from nature, from society, from the product of his work. Christianity characterizes the contradiction in the human condition as human *sinfulness*, without excluding the legitimacy or validity of other characterizations.

We have the classic description of the sinfulness of the human condition in St. Paul's Letter to the Romans: "The fact is, I know of nothing good living in me — living, that is, in my unspiritual self — for though the will to do what is good is in me, the performance is not, with the result that instead of doing the good things I want to do,

I carry out the sinful things I do not want. When I act against my will then, it is not my true self doing it, but sin which lives in me." (Rom 7, 18-20) Between the "ought" and the "is", between perception and willing, between willing and performance there exists contradiction. And man's moral perception also makes him squarely responsible for the condition in which he is, affording him no easy and cheap excuse. The contradiction in his existence is at once man's doing and his suffering, individually and socially. It is not by accident or by the inexorable decree of some blind fate that man is how he is. Rather it is man's own responsible doing and the result of his doing that he is how he is, so that no one can plead alibi or point an accusing finger at another. Every man, to the extent that he shares in the human nature, shares also in the responsibility for this contradiction and this responsibility and this contradiction has to do with God his Creator. That is the lesson of the biblical story of the Fall. *

The story is not concerned with offering a metaphysical explanation for the existence of evil either in man or in nature. (Evil is there, before ever man sinned, as a seductive power in nature and as a tendency in man, and neither excuse nor explanation is offered for this.) What the story does concern itself with is man's free and responsible complicity with evil and his consequent subjection to it.

Now, in placing man the sinner before God his Creator, the Bible does two things. First, even as sinner and subject to evil, man remains free and master of his destiny and not inescapably enslaved to evil, and he remains this under the providential care of his God. (Against thee, thee only have I sinned and done what is evil in thy sight." Ps 51, 4). Secondly, man is offered the promise of ultimate liberation from his sinful condition as well as the possibility to attain liberation by his own work, and suffering, failure and disappointment.

* Incidentally, the Bible does not assume the fall of man as a historical fact. The fact is human alienation. The Bible merely uses the medium of myth (like all ancient literature) to throw light upon and interpret the fact, that is all.

Man New-Created in Jesus Christ

Created and fallen. That, however, is not the last word about man. The third and the most important aspect of the Christian concept of man is that of man's new being as redeemed and recreated in Jesus Christ. Here we return to the central truth we stated at the beginning. In the person of Jesus Christ, Son of God and Man, through his death and resurrection, God reconciled the world to himself and so redeemed man objectively and decisively from the power of sin and evil. This "saving event" of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ has several aspects. By taking upon himself death (which is the ultimate in suffering) and overcoming it Jesus sets man free from its decisive grip on man's destiny. Jesus's resurrection is not the mere return to life of an individual but the breaking in of God's life and the outpouring of his Spirit upon all mankind, like the grain of wheat falling into ground dies, so that it bears much fruit (Jn 12, 24). St. Paul celebrates the victory Christ has won over death in an outburst of joy: "Death is swallowed up in victory. Death, where is your victory? Death, where is your sting? Now the sting of death is sin... So let us thank God for giving us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1Cor 15, 55-57). Consequent upon man's reconciliation with God, men are reconciled among themselves, with Christ as their head and unifying principle. The wall separating man from man is abolished in Christ. There are no more distinctions between Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female, but all of you are one in Christ Jesus. (Gal 3, 28) In the Christian confession, Jesus Christ is not merely a historical individual (his historicity is emphatically affirmed), but also the new inner principle of life and activity for man, man getting a "new self" through the shared life of Christ (cf. Eph 4, 24; Col 3, 4; Jn 14, 6). In and through Jesus the transcendence of God becomes truly immanent in the universe and in man.

Here we may cast a second look at the problem of evolution. We saw that in contemporary Christian understanding

evolution and creation are complementary aspects of the same reality and process. In the context of the new creation of the universe in Jesus Christ, the evolution-creation process receives a new determination. God no more remains outside the process of evolution, personally uninvolved in the destiny of the evolving universe. In Jesus, God becomes part of the process and by that takes up its leadership from inside, so that evolution now becomes also God's own evolution. In the evolutionary vision of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (the Jesuit Paleontologist-philosopher who has found a place of honour also in the New Soviet Encyclopedia) Jesus Christ is the Omega Point of evolution, the life force and main shoot of the tree of evolution, in its upward (Godward) striving and growth.

The new conception of evolution-creation has momentous consequences. While in the classical conception of Darwin and Huxley, natural selection, struggle for existence and survival of the fittest is the inexorable law (which, incidentally, also govern the competitive philosophy of classical capitalism), here love and concern unto total self-sacrifice for the weakest becomes the rule. What should survive is no more the fittest or the strongest but the whole and all its parts.

This immediately poses problems also for theology. In classical theology the ultimate resolution of the drama of creation is through a judgement which will separate the good from the evil. And this is not some sort of a distortion of the original Christian message in later theology, but has the warrant of the Gospels themselves. How would this square with an evolutionary vision in which the whole universe will find consummation in God?

The answer to this apparent dilemma is that we are not concerned here with metaphysical knowledge but with religious commitment and hope and the vision they inspire. Fulfilment and consummation of everything in Christ will take place, but not automatically and as a matter of course. Each one is called and given the power to hope for and commit oneself to the final communion of creation with God. The realization of the hope will depend upon the commitment. And this hope and commit-

ment, inspiring and supporting each other, constitute the Christian faith. where there is no metaphysical guarantee for any magical realization of human dreams independently of man's labour and dedication.

Thus understood, redemption or salvation is primarily that of the totality of the human race and the world. Only subsumed under the totality and in relation to it does individual salvation make sense. Individual salvation through and after death does matter. But it may be taken for granted and as assured in one's commitment to the well-being of one's fellow men in the world. This, it seems to me, is the lesson of Jesus' discourse on the Judgement. (Mt. 25, 31-46)

Conclusion

Let me conclude by summing up. Man is the central object of concern for the Christian faith, man in his praxis, in his striving for liberation here and hereafter. Man is the unique product of nature and evolution — unique also in relation to animals. In respect of all that is non-human, man's position and role are dominating. He may use, control, cultivate, transform (but not squander and wantonly destroy), guiding himself by what he perceives to be best for him and his species. Man may be properly called a creative animal.

Mankind or the human species is one in nature and destiny. No race or group of men may claim or exercise superiority over others; neither may individuals or groups strive for their own welfare unconcerned for the welfare of others and of the world. For man is essentially a corporeal and social being with a corporate future and destiny. This man is the creator of his own future and the shaper of his own destiny in essential relation with his kind.

On the other hand, man is not alone, neither his world. By essential necessity man is a relationship to the other who is his Creator and Lord and, as such, the ultimate source, centre and goal of human life and striving. But God is not simply Other. Through his Word and his Spirit, God becomes interior and im-

manent to the world and to man. This happens with ultimate decisiveness and concreteness in Jesus Christ. Consequently, as worker and sufferer, man has essential relationship and fellowship with God. This relationship and fellowship with God necessitates an attitude of prayer and worship, as well as obedience and surrender, as integral to human existence.

As for man's structure, the Christian concept has an essential and mutually irreducible bipolarity of spirit and matter. By informing matter, spirit raises matter to higher levels of being and organization. The Christian concept of man affirms transcendence in two ways. In one way, there is the transcendence of God, as already stated. Secondly, there is man's own transcendence over evil and death. Death and decay are ineluctable laws governing finite reality and, as far as man is concerned, intimately connected with his sinfulness. But in Jesus' resurrection and exaltation and the consequent outpouring of God's Spirit upon man, the Christian sees the guarantee and the beginning of the final and total overcoming of death and decay not only in man's case of whole universe: "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; the first heaven and the first earth had disappeared now, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the holy city, and the new Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven, as beautiful as a bride all dressed for her husband. Then I heard a loud voice call from the throne, 'You see this city? Here God lives among men. He will make his home among them; they shall be his people, and he will be their God; his name is God-with-them. He will wipe away all tears from their eyes; there will be no more death, and no more mourning or sadness. The world of the past has gone.'" (Rev 21. 1-4)

Here a brief critical comment on a couple of points raised by Dr. Mathew Kurian's paper may be permitted. The Marxist concept of man rejects all theological references and interpretations, that is well known. What is not explained, or interpreted by this rejection is the **fact** that, historically and anthropologically, some sort of theological reference and interpretation was part and parcel of human thinking and acting during all stages of societal development. The most

primitive societies (Where "primitive communism" prevailed and so was prior to private property and alienation) were not exceptions to this general rule. This fact cannot be asserted away but understood and interpreted. So, too, as Father Kappen has pointed out, Marxism fails to answer existential questions bearing upon the ultimate meaning of life and, especially, death. These questions will not cease to be terribly nagging questions, by merely rejecting the existential positions.

The success of any dialogue will consist in the unreserved openness to truth and freedom in respect of all theories and dogmas without exception. Our central point of concern is man, the men of flesh and blood; here our interests ultimately meet and become absolutely identical. Dogmas, theories and systems, however sacred and "infallible", have value and relevance to the extent, only to the extent, that they serve the cause of man. Neither need the theo-centrally accustomed Christian feel upset by such a position, for it is God who made man his own central concern, identified himself with man, the alienated, humiliated and needy man and has willed that the ultimate destiny of man shall be determined solely by what he does "unto this last of my brothers".

Questions for discussion

1. What is the central point of contact between the Marxist and Christian concepts of man?
2. In what way is Jesus Christ pivotal to the Christian understanding of man?
3. What is the Christian understanding of creation? Can it be reconciled with Evolution? How?
4. What are the implications of the statement: "Man is created in the image of God"?
5. What is the relevance of the biblical story of the Fall? What does the story want to convey?
6. What does Redemption by Jesus demand of man in respect of the world and fellow man?

Ever broader Catholic forces, members of other Christian communities and adherents of other faiths play an important role in the struggle for the rights of the working people and for democracy and peace. The Communist and Workers' Parties recognize the necessity of dialogue and joint action with these forces, which is an inseparable part of the struggle for the development of Europe in a spirit of democracy and in the direction of social progress.

-Document of the Conference of the Communist and Workers' Parties of Europe, (East) Berlin, June 1976

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